

## **Stranger Than Strange by Libra\_Unbalanced**

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**Summary:**

Percy's been transported back in time. However, he isn't sure if his current situation is any better than the one he left in present-day New York.

## 1. Chapter 1

Percy Jackson wasn't scared. No he was absolutely fucking terrified. But then again, who wouldn't be if they just woke up a desolate room with memories that weren't his own. The sixteen year wondered if this was Kronos' fault. If the titan had managed to send him somewhere so that he couldn't fight before his essence was scattered in the winds of Tartarus again for all eternity.

Percy and himself stuck in thought for what seemed like hours, but when the door to his room slid open he became aware that the passing of time was much less than he'd thought. That door opened every day at eight o'clock sharp and what followed didn't particularly make Percy happy.

“Hello Twelve, how are you feeling today?”

Percy didn't answer. He was still confused and his head hurt like Zeus had lout out a godly sized thunderclap neck to his ear. Even if his head felt like someone had dropped a stack of bricks on it, Percy studied the man in front of him. The man's white hair was combed back neatly, and his blue eyes held kindness as he looked at the boy in front of him. Percy wasn't surprised when he saw a glimpse of hostility and maliciousness hidden just underneath the kindness.

“Today is a very special day for you and Eleven, there will be very special people watching you two today but just act like it's a regular day and everything will be fine. Today both you and eleven will be going in the tanks just so you can with Eleven if something goes wrong.”

It was then that Percy was undoubtedly sure that something would go wrong. The rules of his life commanded nothing less. Whether it was today, tomorrow, or sometime in the future, something would go wrong. Percy didn't know how to feel about that. Whether it would turn out good or bad for him was always a mystery, one that Percy was only able to solve at the last minute, no matter how hard he tried. He prayed to the fates, to the gods, and every other immortal being out there that this turned out well for him. The man, Percy remembered his name to be Brenner, gave what seemed to be a kind

smile and Percy groaned in his head. The only reason Percy was allowing himself to be treated this way by the old man was because of Eleven.

Percy remembered that he was fiercely protective of the girl. Brenner treated her like she was a test subject, only offering false affection and thinly veiled threats. Percy hated the way the man treated the younger girl and so he cooperated so at the girl didn't face such harsh treatment.

Percy ran a hand through his hair and let out a sigh before allowing himself to be led to the lab by the men that Brenner had brought to his room, cell, whatever you want to call it.

Before their journey ended Brenner led Percy to a room where he instructed the boy to change into a stupid looking scientific suit that he always wore whenever he went into the tank. Percy hated the suit, it was damn ugly.

They led him to the tanks and when Eleven saw Percy, he actually had to struggle to keep himself balanced when the younger girl launched herself into his arms. As Eleven hugged him tightly around the waist, Percy whispered comforting words into her ear. She would be okay, that was something that he promised.

Things went well at first, and then they just didn't.

Percy and Eleven were both lowered into the tanks and then suddenly, they were surrounded by darkness. Then, Percy saw Eleven again. Water covered the floor and they were ankle deep in it Eleven grabbed Percy's hand as she looked at something in the distance.

Percy turned and all he saw was a hunched over figure Its skin was grey and lacking any type of hair. Slowly the two of them walked toward the figure. Their steps were slow and cautious. The smell of death hit Percy's nose before he was sure what to call it. The creature seemed to be eating and Percy hated to think about what exactly the creature seemed to be consuming readily.

Eleven reached out, and Percy found that he couldn't stop her. Percy let out a small gasp as the creature stopped eating and slowly turned toward them.

As Percy saw the monsters horrible face, Eleven screamed. Percy's eyes opened in the darkness of his isolation tank and he could hear the room outside of the tank shaking. He could still hear Eleven screaming and before he knew it he was using his powers. These weren't the powers that he'd received from his father these were powers that came with a throbbing headache that left him seeing double. The top of his tank was ripped off and suddenly Percy was drowned in the light again. He ripped the submersion helmet from his head and quickly swam to the top of the tank only to find himself face to face with chaos.

Scientists were running all around the lab, furiously trying to fix the malfunctioning machines against the walls. On the opposite wall, Percy saw why some of the other scientists were panicking. A giant crack had been making its way up the wall, slowly becoming wider and wider. Percy could still hear Eleven banging against the metal of her submersion tank. Reaching out, Percy concentrated and waited to feel a familiar headache that accompanied him using his powers.

The edges of Eleven's tank crumpled in on themselves before they were violently ripped in half. Water spilled forward and Percy used his powers to make sure that Eleven didn't fall. He gently set the girl down on the floor before climbing out of his own tank. Before anyone could see or stop them Percy grabbed Eleven's hand and ran from the lab. Neither of them looked back at the destruction that continued behind them.

The building shook once again and Percy briefly wondered if the people inside would be okay. But despite his worrying, Percy didn't stop running. He quickly picked up Eleven as the halls of Hawkins lab continued to twist and turn around them until they found a door. It's employees were too concentrated on staying alive to notice two of the children they'd experimented on slip through the front door and run into the woods surrounding the lab.

It was then that Percy vowed to protect Eleven, even if it cost him his life.

## 2. The Vanishing of Will Byers ~ Part 1

The sound of lawn sprinklers coming on fill the empty streets of a 1980s suburban cul-de-sac. It's quiet, calm even. Inside the basement of one house, the dramatic voice of a young boy can be heard, dramatic and intense.

"Do you hear that? Listen..." He says to the three other boys sitting around him. "Something is coming... something hungry for blood..."

The group of boys, all twelve years old, play Dungeons and Dragons. They sit around a small card table with a grid map spread out before them, along with an almost empty pizza box, canned Cokes, and most importantly the Dungeons and Dragons monster manual.

The one speaking, Mike Wheeler, is a skinny boy with brown eyes and darker brown hair. Not only is he the Dungeon master for tonight's game, but he is also the leader of the small group we see before us.

The other boys lean forward, far more interested than before, even if they were previously entranced by the story unfolding before them. Lucas Sinclair is a twelve-year-old black boy making his way through the game as a knight.

Sitting beside Lucas is Dustin Henderson, a boy with blue eyes and brown hair, plays the game as a dwarf.

Lastly sitting beside Dustin is Will Byers, who plays the game as a wizard. He is another with brown eyes and brown hair.

"What is it?" asks Will.

"What if it's the Demogorgon? If it's the Demogorgon we're in some deep shit." Dustin chimes in.

"It's not the Demogorgon" Lucas quickly denies. Mike waits for them to stop talking before he continues on with the game.

"An army of Troglodytes charge into the chamber!" He slams SIX WINGED MINIATURES onto the map. "Their tails drum the floor.

Boom! Boom! Boom!"

"Troglodytes?!" Dustin yells and Lucas gives him a smug look.

"Toldja," Lucas says and Dustin scoffs.

Mike looks over his shoulder and his eyes grow wide.

"Wait, do you hear that?" Mike says before pausing. " Boom! Boom! BOOM! That sound, it didn't come from the Troglodytes. No. It came from something else."

Mike slams a large two-headed figure onto the map.

"THE DEMOGORGON," Mike yells out.

Dustin, Lucas and Will stare at the figure in silence before them. It doesn't take long before Dustin breaks the silence.

"We're in deep shit."

"Will, what's your action," Mike asks the smaller boy.

Will swallows. God, he suddenly wishes it wasn't his turn.

"I-I don't know." He says after a few moments. His mind is blank and he realized that he doesn't really know what to do.

"Use a fireball on him," Lucas suggests to him and Will nods.

"I'd have to roll thirteen or higher," he replies as the cogs begin to turn in his head.

"Too risky," Dustin say before throwing out a suggestion of his own. "Cast a protection spell."

"Don't be a wimp! Use a fireball." Lucas says.

"No, use a protection spell!"

Mike interrupts before either of them can speak again.

"The Demogorgon is tired of your silly human bickering. It stomps

toward you. BOOM!"

"FIREBALL HIM WILL!"

"Another step. BOOM!"

"Cast protection!"

"It roars in anger."

"Fireball!"

"Protection!"

"And-"

"FIREBALL!" Will finally screams out.

Will quickly rolls the dice, but it's a little too hard. The dice scatter to the other side of the basement. It lands by the basement steps.

"What is it?!" Lucas practically screams, anxious to hear the outcome of the disastrous roll.

"I don't know!" Will screams back.

"Is it a thirteen?" Dustin asks amongst the calamity of their situation.

"I DON'T KNOW!" Will screams again and for a few moments, there is nothing but silence. Then as if they all share a collective mind the four boys scramble to look for the dice.

Before they have a chance to find it, the basement door swings open with a loud thump. In the doorway stands Karen Wheeler, Mike's mom

"Mom," Mike says with exasperation written all on his face. "We're in the middle of a campaign."

"You mean the end, right?" Karen taps her watch. "Fifteen after."

Mike's eyes widen and he quickly chases his mom out of the

basement. The campaign can't end yet, not when it was starting to get good. Sure they were fighting but what good group of friends doesn't fight over something they're passionate about. He's sure that he can convince his mother to give them some extra time while the others search for the dice.

"Just twenty more minutes Mom, please?"

"It's a school night, Michael, and I just put Holly to bed. You can finish next weekend." She says as if she's not ruining one of the best moments of his childhood.

"That'll ruin the flow Mom. PLEASE." Mike doesn't even hesitate to put on the puppy dog eyes and he watches as his mother sighs.

"Michael."

"I'm serious, Mom! It took two weeks to plan. How was I supposed to know it'd take ten hours?"

"You've been playing ten hours?"

"That's not the point," Mike says. " The point of this all is that if we don't finish tonight, everything will be ruined. Two weeks of planning, two weeks of making sure that everything was perfect for tonight. If we stop right now, all that hard work will be for nothing. This is the most work I've put into anything in a long time. Do you want all of that to go to waste Mother?"

Mike's dad smacks the tv in the living room as Mike's gives Karen a pointed look.

"Dad, don't you think-" He begins to ask after looking away from his mother, but his father cuts him off.

"I think you should listen to your Mother." He says before smacking the tv once again. "DAGGUM PIECE OF JUNK!"

In the basement, Lucas, Dustin, and Will begin stuffing their things into their backpacks.

"Does the seven-count?" Will asks quietly.

"Shit," Lucas mutters. "It was a seven?"

Will nods.

"Did Mike see it?" Lucas asks and Will shakes his head.

"Then it doesn't count."

All three boys nod and zip up their backpacks and race up the stairs. Dustin holds up the pizza box. Only a single slice left inside.

"Hey guys, anyone want this?!" He asks loudly.

"No," Lucas and Will say simultaneously."

Dustin looks back at the pizza and shrugs before he heads upstairs. With the pizza box in his arms, he knocks on the door. Even though the door is already cracked, Dustin doesn't dare go in. The teenager inside can cause a lot more hurt to him than he can to her.

The teenager in question is Nancy Wheeler, Mike's sixteen-year-old sister. Even when she's just sitting on her bed in pajamas, she looks pretty. There's a phone in her hand and while she speaks to someone on the other side, her fingers twist its cord.

"I know, I know, but I don't think so, yeah, he's cute, but, Barb. BARB! Listen to me."

Before she can continue Dustin waves to get her attention. Once he has it, Dustin holds up the pizza box and shakes it to show that there's a leftover slice inside.

"Hey Nancy, there's a slice left if you want. It's Pepperoni and sausage

--

"Yeah hold on a sec Barb." Nancy gets up from her bed and closes the door in Dustin's face. Dustin gave one final nod before walking away from Nancy's room.

WHOOM! Dustin shuts the garage door behind him.

He'd been resigned to eating the last pizza slice. The other three boys are already outside. Lucas and Will are already climbing onto their bikes and Mike is standing there watching them.

"Something's wrong with your sister," Dustin says while still chewing the last piece of pizza.

"What're you talking about?" Mike asks with a raised eyebrow.

"She's got a stick up her butt." He replies after a few moments.

"It's 'cause she's seeing that barf bag, Steve Harrington," Lucas adds in.

"Yeah," Dustin agrees "She's turning into a real jerk."

"She's always been a real jerk." Someone quickly pointed out.

"Nu-uh," Dustin said as he climbed onto his bike. "She used to be cool. Like that time she dressed up as an elf for our Eldertree campaign."

"Four years ago!" Mike all but screamed.

"Just sayin'," Dustin said with a shrug before shim and Lucas biked out of the garage.

Will doesn't follow behind them just yet, instead, he turns to Mike.

"It was a seven." He says quietly.

"What?" Mik questions.

"The roll," Will says before pausing. "It was a seven. The Demogorgon

got me."

Will gives a small shrug and gets on his bike.

"See you tomorrow." With that, Will rides off.

Mike notices the light in the garage flicker. Strange, he thought to himself before switching off the lights and heading back inside.

The boys bike home. Their handlebar lights wink in the night. And good thing, because it's very dark out here.

Lucas slowly peels off from the group.

"See ya, ladies," he calls out as he slowly begins to drift further and further away.

"Kiss your mom 'night for me." Dustin calls back at him, which leads to Lucas flipping him the bird as he bikes up a driveway' y towards a two-story house.

It's silent between will and Dustin as they continue on their way home. Eventually, though, Dustin breaks it.

"Race to my place?" The boy suggests. "Winner gets a comic?"

Will thought about it for a few moments.

"Any comic?"

"Yeah," Dustin said hesitantly and Will had heard enough. Faster than Dustin would have expected Will is already pedaling away

"Hey! That's not fair!" Dustin yells as he pedals after Will. He's already so far behind and Will has already whizzed past a house at the far end of the neighborhood. When he's about fifty yards away from Dustin, he turns and waves.

"I'll take your "X-Men" one-three four!" Will says when Dustin finally come to a stop next to him.

"... Man." Dustin days as he takes a deep breath.

Not much later, Will begins his own journey home. He bikes along an empty forest road alone because he lives much further out than the rest of his friends. It's quiet out tonight and much darker than usual. The only sound Will hear is the sound of cicadas and the gentle blowing of the wind. They are the only things to keep him company on his lonely ride home.

Soon enough he bikes bust a large metal fence and the warning sign hanging on it reads in big black letters.

HAWKINS NATIONAL LABORATORY. RESTRICTED AREA. NO TRESPASSING.

Will looks down as the headlight of his bike flickers. A moment later they return to normal and Will looks backs up. To his surprise, there's a tall figure standing in the middle of the road in front of him. Will yanks on the handlebars of the bike to avoid hitting the figure in front of him but he loses control. He veers off the road and into the woods next to it and crashes.

Will flies off the bike and crashes into the dirt. Will lies there on the ground gasping, trying to piece together what the hell had just happened. Suddenly he hears strange guttural sound coming from behind him.

Will quickly rises to his feet and turns toward the sound. He could hear the sounds of leaves rustling coming from the forest in front of him. As the sounds grow closer, Will makes a split second decision. He quickly abandons his bike and runs.

It doesn't take long for him to exit the woods. His house is just up ahead and he couldn't be happier to see it. It's small, lower class and damn near falling apart, but the sight of it fills him with such a happy feeling in his chest.

Will quickly enters the house and slams the door shut behind him and bolts the lock.

A dog with a mess of shaggy fur quickly rushes to greet him.

"MOM?! JONATHAN?! MOM?!"

He calls as he checks his Mom's and his brother's bedroom. It doesn't take him long to figure out that no one else is home. He's all alone.

Will scrambles back to the living room window. He cups his hands to the glass and peers out into the yard. It's dark, murky and quiet. Laundry from the other day flutters on a clothesline and Will's eyes widen as he sees what hiding behind it.

Will finds himself praying that it's just his mother bringing in the laundry a little later than usual. But some part of him knows that it isn't true. The figure standing there amongst the billowing laundry doesn't even look like his mother. In fact, everything about it seems off. Its proportions seem off. Its head is too large, its arms are too long. Its body is swollen and bent in a strange, twisted shape. That thing is too deformed to be his mother. It's too deformed to be human.

The wind blows once again, the clothes flutter and the figure is gone

Will goes pale and he can feel his heart jump into his throat and he quickly runs into the kitchen. Will rips the phone receiver off the kitchen wall and dials 911. The phone doesn't even ring, and all Will gets is low-end static.

"Hello?! HELLO?!" He shouts into the phone.

Will pauses. He hears something on the other line. But not a voice... it's that guttural sound he heard in the woods. The pitch rises and falls, making a series of strange sounds. Words maybe? It is as if the figure... whoever... whatever it is... is somehow speaking to him through the phone receiver.

Behind him, Will hears Chester begin to growl at the front door. Will lowers the phone and looks back at the door. A shadow fills the crack at the base of the door. Then somehow, as impossible as it seemed, the chain bolt begins to slide open, as if drawn by an invisible hand. The metal shrieks.

Will drops the phone and run. He explodes out of the back screen door and sprints into an old wooden shed. He slams the door shut behind him, his breathing heavy. His eyes dart around the shed

searching for something to help defend himself. The shed is cluttered and dark, lit only by a naked light bulb, hanging from the ceiling. The bulb buzzes and flickers softly. Then he sees it. It's an old Remington rifle hanging on a wall mount. It's dusty, but Will is pretty sure that it still works.

Will quickly pulls it down and grabs a few of the ammo shells from the workbench. He loads the rifle as fast as he can, but he's so terrified that his hands are sweating and shaking. Once he finishes loading the gun he quickly snaps the chamber shut and aims it at the door. The rifle trembles in his hands.

Even as Will keeps his eyes trained on the door, a shadowed figure slowly begins to rise behind him. Will senses the movement and turns around but he doesn't fire. He finds that he can move and the only thing that seems to be running through his veins is fear. He tries his best to fight back tears.

"... P-please." The word is barely above a whisper.

A terrible high pitched shrieking fills the shed. The dangling light bulb glows brighter and brighter, filling the shed with an overwhelming white light.

The, as abruptly as the shrieking had started it stopped. The light bulb dims and returns to normal.

The shed is empty. The rifle lays on the ground where Will once stood. The night is dark and quiet once again.

Will Byers has vanished.

Ten minutes later, someone walks through Will's house. Iridescent green eyes glow in the overwhelming darkness. His face is dimly lit by a faint bronze glow as he quickly walks to the shed.

"Dammit," Percy Jackson curses as he looks around. "That gods damned thing got away."